(d) whether Government have ever thought of providing support services like counselling for women, sensitisation of the community and medicos?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) The National Crime Records Bureau maintains data of rape cases belonging to the age group of 16—18 years instead to 15—17 years. They have reported that a total of 15468 rape victims were reported in the country during 1999, of which 3849 belonged to the age group of 16—18 years which accounted for 24.9% of the total victims.

(b) to (d) Apart from ensuring stricter enforcement of the penal provisions, the Government is attempting to bring about an overall improvement in the status of women and children especially the girl child through better education, health care and economic empowerment of women. Schemes for employment and income generation like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Setting-up of employment-cum-income generating Units for Women (NORAD), Socio-Economic Programme (SEP), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Swaran Jayanti Rozgar Yojana (SJRY) etc. are implemented especially in high supply areas of victims of prostitution and for rehabilitation of rescued victims of prostitution. Efforts are also made through print media and electronic media to project a positive image of women in society and to bring about changes in societal attitudes towards women and the girl child.

Women Commission's Report regarding buying and selling of Girls in A.P.

†3257. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken cognizance of the report of the Commission for women which pertains to large scale buying and selling of small girls in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details of the action taken by Government to check such type of misdeeds together with its work plan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) The National Commission for Women constituted two Inquiry Committees to investigate into the alleged sale of girls in Ranga Reddy district

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and other places of Andhra Pradesh and alleged illegal detention of twenty girl children in an unauthorized orphanage run by an American couple in Karnataka, Bangalore.

(b) After preliminary investigations, the State Government had initiated action against some agencies. Two of these namely, (i) Indian Council for Social Welfare, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh and (ii) John Abraham Memorial Bethany Home, Tandur, Andhra Pradesh, which were Central Government recognized placement agencies, were immediately de-recognized. A detailed inquiry is being conducted by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh.

After receipt of reports from Andhra Pradesh about the irregularities, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment have issued directives to all the State Governments to take stringent action against organizations indulging in illegal activities in the field of adoption. All the State Governments have been asked to take necessary steps to prevent such incidents in future which *inter alia* include:

(i) Licensing of all Residential Homes & setting up of State adoptions unit.

(ii) Joint inspection should take place of orphanages and agencies.

(iii) Enforcement of Orphanages & other Charitable Homes Act, 1960.

(iv) Monitoring of adoption activities quoting recent happening in Andhra Pradesh.

Further, directives have also been issued to the concerned agencies and organizations to streamline their activities and adhere strictly to the Government guidelines in this regard.

Atrocities on women

†3258. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking necessary measures to check increasing atrocities being committed on women in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.